

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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INR-07 NSAE-00 ACDA-07 PRS-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, MASS, AWACS, GW

SUBJECT: FURTHER THREATS THAT THE FRG WILL NOT PURCHASE
AWACS WITHOUT TANK HARMONIZATION

REFS: (A) BONN 03618 DTG 281845Z FEB 77

(B) BONN 04324 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: REFTELS REPORTED THAT INFLUENTIAL GERMAN POLITICIANS, THE MEDIA, AND THE GERMAN PUBLIC AS A WHOLE SEEM TO BE COMING INCREASINGLY OF THE OPINION THAT GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN A NATO AWACS PROGRAM SHOULD BE DEPENDENT UPON A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE TANK HARMONIZATION PROBLEM. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO INSTALL THE 120MM SMOOTH BORE CANNON ON THE U.S. XM-1 AT SOME PARTICULAR POINT IN THE PRODUCTION RUN. THE MARCH 14 ISSUE OF "DER SPIEGEL," GERMANY'S LARGEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE, DEVOTED 2 1/2 PAGES TO THE SUBJECT. THE RESULT IS FURTHER TO RESTRICT MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEBER'S ABILITY TO RESOLVE THE TWIN ISSUES OF AWACS AND TANK COMMONALITY IN A WAY SATISFACTORY TO
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THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

1. "DER SPIEGEL" OFTEN ATTEMPTS TO BE SENSATIONAL AND SUCH WAS THE CASE WITH THIS ARTICLE. UNDER THE HEADLINE "ORIENTAL PRACTICES," THE LEAD PARAGRAPHS SET THE TONE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE ARTICLE:

"THE U.S. ARMY MANIPULATED THE RESULTS OF THE COMPARATIVE TESTS BETWEEN LEOPARD-2 AND XM-1 IN FAVOR OF ITS OWN MODEL. DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER INTENDS TO PROTEST IN WASHINGTON.

WHAT THE VIETNAM WAR FAILED TO DO HAS BEEN DONE BY THE GERMAN-AMERICAN AGREEMENT ON TANK STANDARDIZATION: DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE AMERICANS HAS BEEN DESTROYED. DURING HIS IMPENDING VISIT TO WASHINGTON, LEBER FINALLY INTENDS TO CALL A SPADE A SPADE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE AMERICANS, IN SPITE OF CONCRETE AGREEMENTS, ARE TRYING TO SNEAK OUT OF LEBER'S FAVORITE PROJECT OF TANK STANDARDIZATION. LEBER PARTICULARLY OBJECTS TO THE RUDE WAY USED BY THE WASHINGTON ADMINISTRATION IN MANIPULATING AND PUBLISHING THE RESULTS OF THE GERMAN-AMERICAN TANK TEST. LEBER HAS BEEN QUITE FURIOUS ABOUT THESE 'ORIENTAL PRACTICES'."

2. THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO CLAIM THAT MINISTER LEBER HAS FULL SUPPORT BOTH FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT IN HIS ALLEGED DETERMINATION NOT TO AGREE TO A GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN A NATO AWACS UNLESS THE U.S. ADHERES TO THE TANK HARMONIZATION AGREEMENT. THE FINAL PORTION OF THE ARTICLE, WHICH WAS OBVIOUSLY PREPARED WITH THE HELP OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY OR INDUSTRY, MAKES A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE U.S. XM-1, THE FRG LEOPARD-2, AND THE SOVIET T-72 TANKS. "DER SPIEGEL" STATES THAT THIS COMPARISON IS DESIGNED TO COUNTER THE CLAIM APPEARING IN AMERICAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEWSPAPERS LAST WEEK THAT THE LEOPARD-2 HAD DONE POORLY IN COMPARISON WITH THE XM-1 (REF B).

3. COMMENT: WHILE A FEW VOICES NOW BEING RAISED HERE IN THE FRG ARE POINTING OUT THAT THIS KIND OF SLANGING MATCH IS HELPING NEITHER THE U.S., THE FRG, NOR NATO, MOST NEWSMEN AND POLITICIANS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE AN ISSUE WHICH IS POPULAR TO EXPLOIT. HOPEFULLY, MINISTER LEBER'S VISIT WITH SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN WILL HELP MAKE REASON PREVAIL. END COMMENT. STOESEL

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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